

## TESTIMONY

Submitted by Celia Boniewicz

### **Appropriations Public Hearing on the Governor's Proposed FY 23 Budget Adjustments for Human Services Agencies**

February 23, 2022

Good afternoon/evening honorable appropriations committee members, my name is Celia Boniewicz and I am a mental health client and advocate for behavioral health services provided by home care nurses. I am here to explain why I have such strong conviction, in this matter in the area of behavioral health.

Funds for mental health services, provided to home healthcare nurses, must be included in the budget, specifically reflecting the 2016 15% Cut incurred by Home Health Care Services. We are here to request the 10.5% differential to make up for the cut as providers did receive 4.5% in 2021.

After leaving inpatient mental health care, I became dependent upon my nurses to provide me the medication I needed to have Even a semblance of a sustainable life. See, I am what they refer to in mental health, a Stockpiler, meaning I keep meds for a future time when I am suicidal. I Will never be healed. Borderlines, never get over it. Medication, properly administered by reliable home care nurses is my only hope to establish even the smallest bit of normalcy. I realize I will be medicated my entire life and I accept that. I trust in my nurses to order, pick up and administer medication. They relieve me of the anxiety of having to remember, knowing that often times I will forget.

For you see, I have a traumatic brain injury (TBI) as well, where Repercussions influence my thoughts between rational and emotional. I am an extremist. Without the aid these nurses provide me, I surely would be long term institutionalized. Suicide is where I tend to go. Without these meds and these nurses, I most likely would not be writing this.

Also, I am on Medicaid. If I didn't have this insurance, I would not still be receiving home services. These services began during my time at a sober house, shelter and two years of Respite housing. Prior to respite, I attempted suicide six times,

resulting in the 10 hospitalizations throughout Connecticut within 1 1/2 years' time.

I first received nursing services once I was transferred to respite housing in 2018 through 2020, where I was monitored. It is then that I began my relationship with these dedicated nurses, who assured me I'd receive my meds at appropriate times each day. If I am not properly medicated, I would be subject to breakdown and more often than not suicide would be attempted. My nurses keep me on point, stabilized, and regulated so I do not experience a major depressive episode.

My nurses, regardless of Covid, have worked collectively as a team, ensuring that every client is seen and their specific needs acknowledged, through respectful empathetic service. They serve as more than as a distributor of medication. They do it all. They order, pick up meds, manage dosage containers, talk with me about my current mental state, while offering recommendations gently and with compassion.

Through diligence on my part, and the inclusion of medication regulation, provided by the community of essential home care nurses, I can BE my "best me". Home care nursing offers assurance for me, that I can enjoy life regardless of my Behavioral Health challenges.

Please find a way to increase the Medicaid rate they receive so I don't lose my nurses and my services. Thank you for your time and for listening to my testimony.